tory of England quite apart from the effects of the bend sinister. The Norman rule of primogeniture meant that the junior male line of great families might rapidly descend in rank whereas the absence of rigid distinctions between classes such as existed in France meant that a gifted man could rise in social status with equal rapidity.

The right to bear arms became important as an outward sign of distinction simply because rank was not sharply defined. The heralds became experts in coats of arms in the 12th century and since proof of right to arms involved proof of pedigree, they gradually became experts in and recorders of genealogy.

Genealogy has in the past suffered because of the tendency of some genealogists to gratify the vanity of families seeking illustrious and sometimes even Biblical ancestry. Sir Anthony quotes John Horace Round who distinguished four varieties of pedigree, "those that rested on garbled versions of perfectly genuine documents . . . those which rested on alleged transcripts of wholly imaginary documents, those which rested on actual forgeries expressly concocted for the purpose, and lastly those which rested on nothing but sheer fantastic fiction." But this book makes it quite clear that critical and scholarly studies of ancestry add to our knowledge of history and social movement.

Eugenists who seek for evidence of long lines of descent of high human ability will not derive much encouragement from this work. To quote the author, "Since the pioneer work of Sir Francis Galton (d. 1911) more than one genealogist student of eugenics has scanned the pedigree of men of genius and talent for evidence of significant patterns of human heredity. Their subject matter being far more complex, they have not succeeded so well as those who have traced the inheritance of diseases and physical peculiarities. They have, however, brought to light interesting links and sequences. As one would expect, the most ambitious constructions are the least convincing, since the longer the pedigree the more numerous the fresh strains coming in to confuse the issue." A false idea of the inheritance of the best qualities may be engendered simply because records of the successful only remain. Although Sir Anthony gives some fascinating illustrations of the social undulations of a few English families it is clear that in general the unsuccessful and non-armigerous branches are lost to history.

Sir Anthony devotes two chapters to the difficulties involved in the pursuit of pedigrees and suggests means by which the work of future genealogists would be simplified. "The first step would be to avoid difficulties for the future by requiring births, marriages and deaths to be registered in a form which connects them. A marriage entry would give full details of the parties' birth and parentage. A birth entry would give the parents' birth particulars and a death entry would give the parentage and birthplace of the deceased. Australia has been able to do this for a century and in France and Germany it has been done for three or more. It ought therefore to be possible in England despite the normal English view that such requirements are invasions of liberty or preparations for new taxation." These suggestions might have met with the approval of Sir Francis Galton who in his essay on Anthropometric Registers deplored the dearth of accurate family histories.

J. P. M. TIZARD

SOCIOLOGY

Bramson, Leon. *The Political Context of Sociology.* Princeton, N.J., 1961. Princeton University Press (London, Oxford University Press). Pp. xi + 164. Price 32s.

THIS STUDY EXAMINES the evolution of ideas about human mass behaviour in Europe and the United States. It started as a doctoral dissertation at Harvard University in 1958, and the author is now Assistant Professor of Social Relations at Harvard. Despite certain defects—it smells of the lamp, and there are too many four syllable words quoted from too many sources—it is an interesting historical survey, and it does succeed in showing how the work of sociologists is influenced by social and political thought. There is an index and a selected bibliography which is useful although pre-1957. (Later works are cited in the Preface.)

The most straightforward chapters are those on European theories of mass society and on the rise of American sociology. Chapter V, on

American studies of mass communications, analyses certain concepts and research, and how they are influenced by the social and political milieu. Chapter VI (Mass Society and Totalitarianism) gives clues to European-American differences, and also describes some of the turgid psychological opinions held by mass society theorists. Dr. Bramson shows how totalitarianism can be "explained" by supporters either of authoritarian families or of permissive parents. He demonstrates what snares arise when concepts such as "mass man" change their meaning; and he shows how pitfalls develop when authors exercise that "extra-scientific judgement" which it is his aim to dissect in the last chapter.

This final chapter (Subjectivity in Social Research) clarifies what has become a general assumption—that the precision of the laboratory should not be sought in sociology. A social scientist is a man before he is a sociologist, and as a man, he has values and goals which are bound to influence his judgements in social science. In Myrdal's words: "A disinterested social science . . . will never exist. We can make our thinking strictly rational . . . only by facing valuations, not evading them." In Bramson's words: "Value judgements must never be allowed to saturate facts." The closing quotation from Redfield's *The Primitive World and its Transformations*, is the key to the book:

> It is because I am a product of civilization that I value as I do. It is because I am a product of civilization that I have both a range of experience within which to do my understanding-valuing and the scientific disciplines that help me to describe what I value so that others will accept it, or, recognizing it as not near enough the truth, to correct it. And if, in this too I am wrong, those others will correct me also.

The author leaves it there. He does not go on to discuss whether the assumption that there is objective truth may not also be a value judgement of our culture, or whether "those others" may belong to a different civilization.

BARBARA S. BOSANQUET

Banton, Michael (Editor). *Darwinism and the Study of Society: A Centenary Symposium.* London, 1961. Tavistock. Pp. xx + 191. Price 21s.

THE TWELVE CONTRIBUTORS to this symposium have evidently taken great pains to prepare and present their information and opinions. This collection is not of thoughts of the moment, typed out after the respective lectures, but of substantial, carefully gathered and sifted statements by a group who have something solid to present.

In his introduction Dr. Bronowski points out that selection occupied a small fraction of Darwin's attention in comparison with the description of the origin of species. However, several generations of sociologists following Darwin took a narrow view in interpreting society in terms of a supposed competitive mechanism before the descriptive base of their own subject had been properly laid out. Basil Willey outlines Darwin's place in the history of thought in the last hundred years, reminding us that Darwin went up to Cambridge intending to be ordained and that unwittingly he has been a power for good in causing the Church to abandon some of her most untenable articles of faith. Later Darwin regarded the sociological fuss with genuinely innocent surprise.

The account by George Shepperson of Darwin's student days at Edinburgh suggests the origin of some of his slowly fermenting intellectual stimulus (though there is little specific recognition of this later). Professor Hogben shows how the actual facts relating to human ecology and the possible evolution of societies of men were unknown in Darwin's time, so that most of the sociological discussion was speculative. Werner Stark digs up some of the old corpses, e.g., Gumplowicz, Ammon and Lapouge, with their arguments which subserve the interests of any successful (or master) race. Professor Waddington reviews the present factual knowledge of inheritance and the process of evolution, thereby showing that sociologists have not proved whether or not human institutions change by a process of evolution. Maynard Smith illustrates certain formal similarities in structure between theories of history and biological theories. Professor Ginsberg outlines the impact which Darwin's work had on social studies, especially theories of the appearance of speech, writing, tool-making, religion and so forth. The progressive "development" of institutions, laws and morals is traced, but without reference to the question (raised by Bronowski) as to whether